

VZCZCXRO7716  
PP RUEHLH RUEHPW  
DE RUEHIL #5060/01 3321034  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 281034Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3516  
INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0950  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7839  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6803  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2349  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 1127  
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 1067  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 8208  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 4201  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 2765  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHWSMRC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 005060

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/26/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PREF](#) [UNHCR](#) [EAID](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: GOP DECLINES UNHCR HELP FOR IDPS FROM SWAT

REF: ISLAMABAD 4993

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Citing concern about the optics, Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority declined to approve the Northwest Frontier Province's request for UN assistance to help displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing the violence in Swat. NDMA claims it has sufficient tents and food, but provincial authorities are frustrated by the lack of supply. The Pakistan Red Crescent Society is authorized to provide assistance and has begun meeting some needs; the International Committee of the Red Cross is also starting to respond. IDP numbers are estimated to range from 40,000-60,000; we cannot confirm what seems to be a high estimate. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) UNHCR Deputy Representative Michael Zwack confirmed his organization was told that UNHCR assistance is not/not needed to meet the needs of thousands of people fleeing the violence in Swat. Gen. (Retd.) Farooq of Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) told Zwack that "Pakistan is not a banana republic" and can take care of its own. Farooq also allegedly gave the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) Special Home Secretary for Refugees and Security, Tippu Khan, a hard time for requesting UNHCR assistance. Khan shared his frustration with UNHCR about not getting the assistance that is supposedly available.

¶3. (C) Farooq told UNHCR that Pakistan produces and stocks tents, provides them to others as needed, and has food and supplies available, so he does not want any UN tents, food, or other assistance. Zwack believes Farooq's position stems in part from his fear of adverse consequences should it become clear through UNCHR logos that Pakistan had asked for international help. However, Farooq is allowing the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, also approached by Tippu Khan, to assist IDPs. Because the Red Crescent is local and Muslim, its optics are acceptable. UNHCR nevertheless told Farooq and the NDMA that they are willing to help, if requested, with advice, technical assistance, supplies, water bladders, food, or whatever is needed.

¶4. (C) ICRC and UNHCR contacts told Consulate Peshawar that an initial attempt, now aborted, to establish an IDP camp may be evidence that some assistance would be

welcome. The Bari Kot camp, about ten kilometers from the district capital of Saidu Sharif, reportedly will not be used after all due to water shortages and intimidation by Maulana Fazlullah, the militant Swat leader now in control of much of the area. ICRC plans to reach out to residents in neighboring districts to offer assistance to those who have fled Swat. A transit camp in Malakand is helping people move to the Benazir Sports Complex in Nowshera. Consulate Peshawar learned that Red Crescent is providing some assistance in that camp, but the Army appears to have the lead.

15. (C) Zwack met again with NWFP authorities in Peshawar, who estimate that 40,000 to 60,000 Swat residents have already fled the region. Zwack admitted it is impossible to confirm what appears to be a high estimate, but UNHCR is accepting this figure for the time being. ICRC has an assessment team in Swat and will have a better figure by the end of this week. Most of the displaced are thought to have taken shelter with family or friends, although Tippu Khan said there are "a few" who came forward for assistance and are currently housed in unused government buildings. As far as UNHCR is aware, there is no one in tents at this time. Afghans are not at issue here as such, but Zwack was assured that all residents in potential danger, both Pakistani and Afghan, have been told to leave the areas of risk, and anyone who asks for assistance will be helped, regardless of nationality.

16. (C) COMMENT. In what form, or how soon, meaningful assistance mechanisms will be delivered is not yet known. The Red Crescent and ICRC are both in the initial stages of assistance and UNHCR is on the sidelines, so it may not be

ISLAMABAD 00005060 002 OF 002

soon enough. Nights in Swat continue to grow colder, although there is no snow yet, but the confrontation between militants and the military shows little sign of abating.

PATTERSON